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ABSTRACT

The results of the 1980 Atlanta, Georgia, public schools reading scores for the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) are presented in this report for grades one through seven. Raw scores and grade equivalents are presented first, followed by a comparison of the 1980 grade equivalents with those from the previous four years, indicating a steady improvement in reading skills at all grade levels. The Atlanta scores are then compared with national scores, indicating that grades three through seven fall below the national norm, although gains for Atlanta remain positive. The report then indicates the percentage of Atlanta students reading above the national norm, showing a steady increase from 1975 through 1980. A discussion of the change from the ITBS to the California Achievement Test (CAT) for 1981 and how the change will affect scores concludes the report. (HOD)

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ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
1976-1980

CS006418

Report No. 14-8, June 1980

Q : WHAT ARE THE 1980 RESULTS ?

1980 ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS READING SCORES IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

Grade	Number of Students Tested	Grade Equivalent Score	Age Achievement Quotient
1	5364	2.2	105
2	4381	2.6	99
3	5327	3.3	97
4	5357	4.1	95
5	5008	4.7	92
6	4928	5.2	88
7	5058	5.8	86

The grade equivalent score (GE) relates test performance to the grade in school. GE appears as two digits: the first digit represents the year and the second digit the month in which the average student in the nation answered the same number of questions correctly. For example, if a student scored 3.7 on the reading test, it means that the student performed on that test like the typical third grade student in the seventh month of the school year.

The age achievement quotient (AAQ) was developed to examine test performance in ungraded schools where a grade level comparison would have no meaning. Rather than a grade level comparison, test performance is related to age levels. If a student's test performance is exactly the same as that of students his age, his AAQ is 100. If his test performance is better than students his age, his AAQ will be greater that 100. An AAQ less than 100 indicates that a student scored lower on the test than most students his age.

Q : HAVE READING SCORES IMPROVED ?

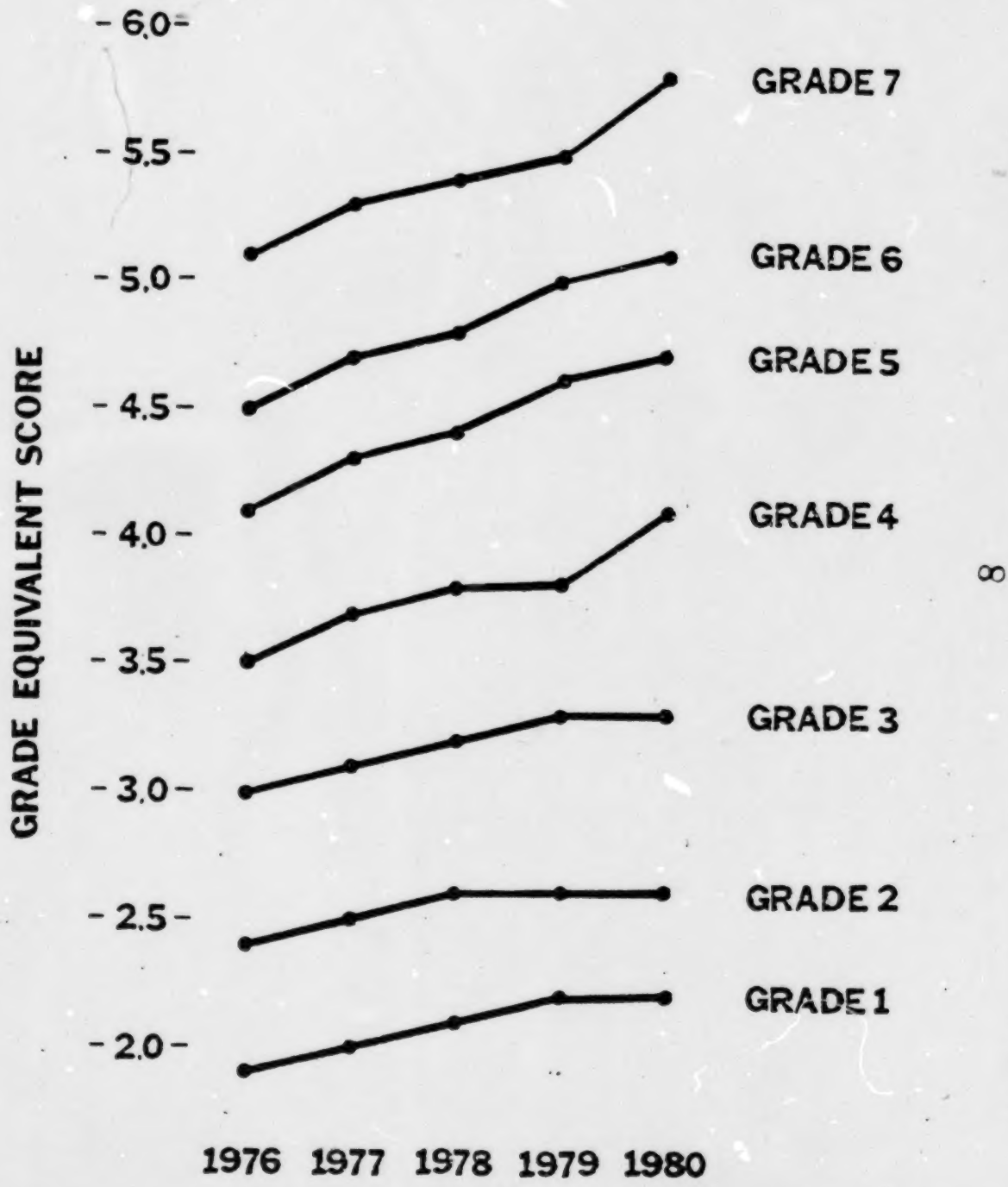
FIVE-YEAR INCREASE IN READING SCORES
IOWA TESTS OF BASIC SKILLS

Grade	Mean Grade Equivalent Score				
	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2
2	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6
3	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3
4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.8	4.1
5	4.1	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7
6	4.5	4.7	4.8	5.0	5.2
7	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.8

Test scores reflect a steady improvement in reading achievement for Atlanta students.

Scores for students in grades 4 and 7 increased by 0.3 years.
Scores for students in grade 6 increased by 0.2 years.
Scores for students in grade 5 increased by 0.1 years.
Scores for students in grades 1, 2, and 3 remained steady.

The graph below indicates that no grade has shown a decline in achievement scores since 1976. Improvement in reading is apparent for all grades.


GRADE EQUIVALENT SCORE
6.0
5.5
5.0
4.5
4.0
3.5
3.0
2.5
2.0
GRADE 7
GRADE 6
GRADE 5
GRADE 4
GRADE 3
GRADE 2
GRADE 1
1976
1977
1978
1979
1980

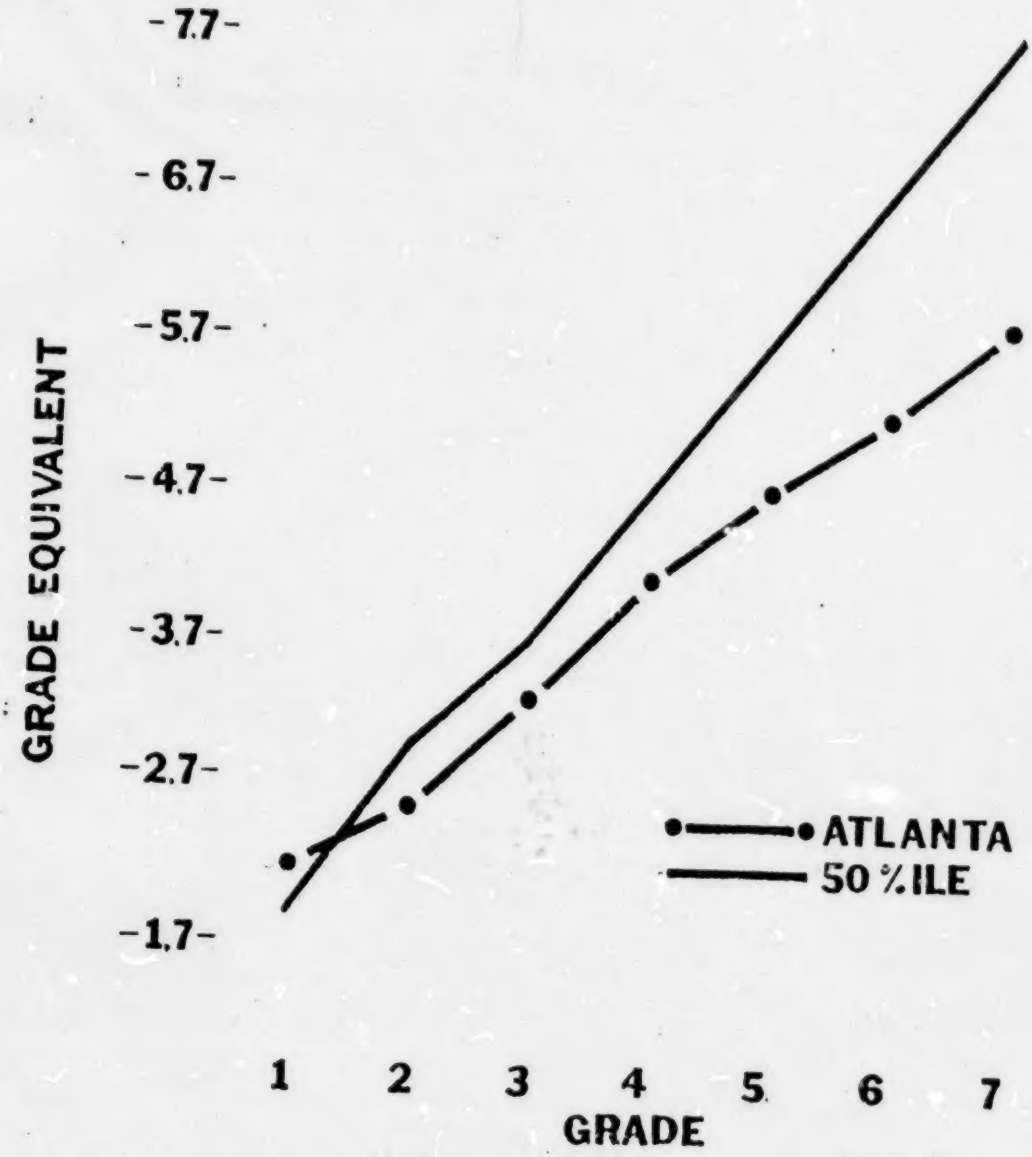
Q : HOW DO THE SCORES COMPARE NATIONALLY ?

First grade scores are above the national norm, and second grade scores are only slightly below the national norm. Scores for the other grades progressively fall below the national norm. This trend does not indicate that there are little or no gains in reading achievement for Atlanta students. To the contrary, gains in Atlanta are positive.

Students who score at the 50th percentile (national norm) improve at the rate of 1.0 grade equivalent units for each year in school. At the 75th percentile the rate of gain is greater than 1.0 grade equivalent units. On the other hand, for students who score at the 25th percentile, the rate of gain is less than 1.0 grade equivalent units per year.

The chart below shows the increase in reading scores for students nationally who score at the 50th percentile (national norm). The average 1980 reading scores for Atlanta students at each grade also are shown.

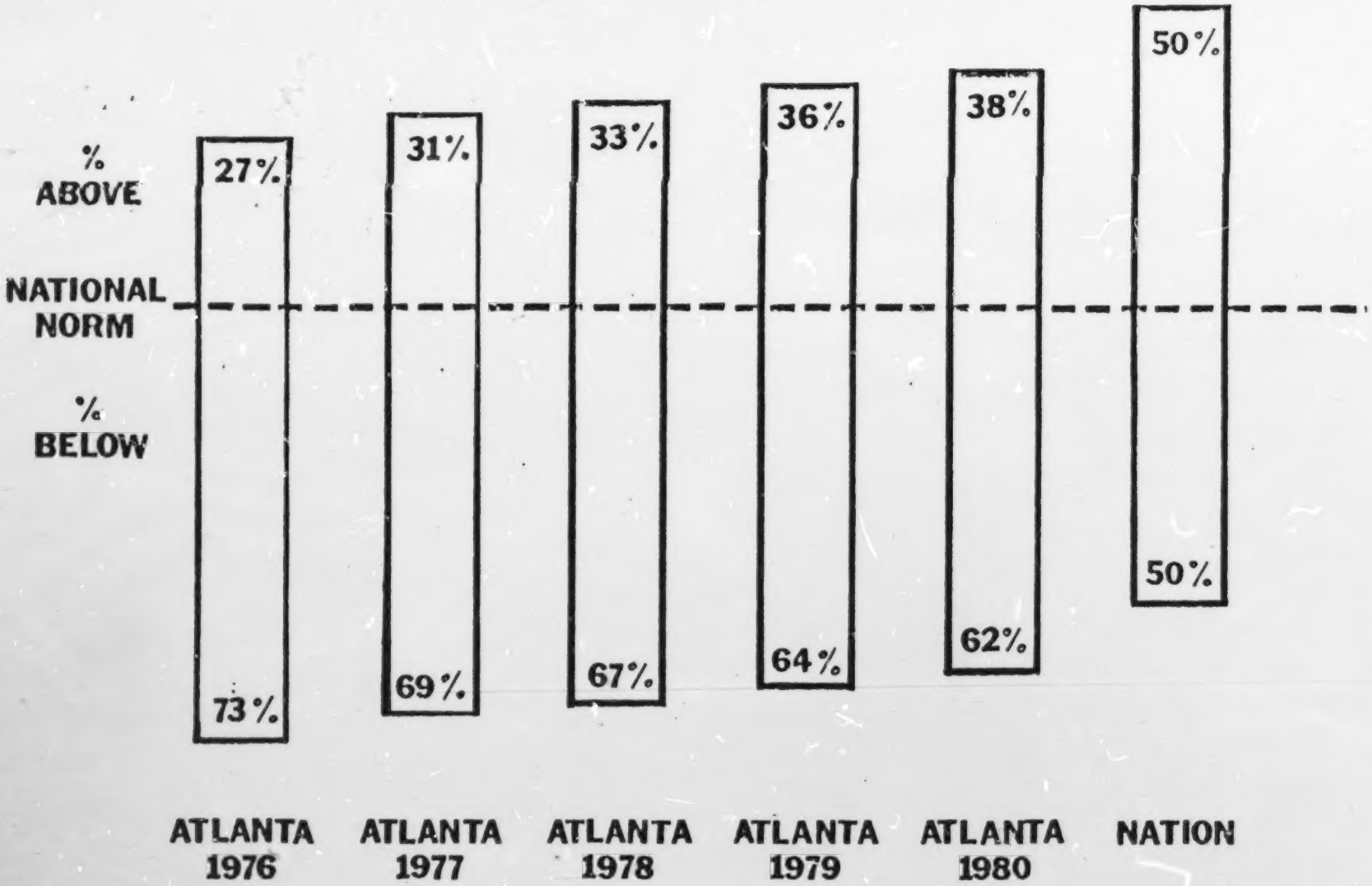
It can be seen that the trend for Atlanta students is consistent with the expectations for scores which are somewhat below the national norm. Growth is positive but not as rapid as the growth at the 50th percentile.


-7.7-
-6.7-
-5.7-
-4.7-
-3.7-
-2.7-
-1.7-
GRADE EQUIVALENT
ATLANTA
50 %ILE
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
GRADE

Q : HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE SCORING ABOVE THE NATIONAL NORM?

When a norm-referenced standardized achievement test such as the ITBS is constructed, the test is administered to a nationally representative sample of many thousand students. The national norm is computed to be the point that divides the scores made by the norming group in half. That is, half of the scores (50%) are higher than the national norm, and the other half of the scores (50%) are lower than the national norm.

The chart below shows that 50 percent of the students in the nation score above the point which represents the national norm. In Atlanta, the percent of students scoring above the national norm has increased steadily since 1976.


% ABOVE
NATIONAL NORM
% BELOW
27%
73%
31%
69%
33%
67%
36%
64%
38%
62%
50%
50%
ATLANTA 1976
ATLANTA 1977
ATLANTA 1978
ATLANTA 1979
ATLANTA 1980
NATION

Q : WILL THE ITBS BE GIVEN NEXT YEAR ?

The Atlanta Public Schools has been administering the 1971 Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) to all students in grades 1 through 7 since 1974. A recently renormed and restandarized edition of the ITBS was published in 1978. In order to provide data consistent with current norms, it became necessary to replace the outdated 1971 edition of the ITBS.

Rather than a blind adoption of the 1978 ITBS, a Test Review Committee was formed to examine several test batteries and recommend the test battery which would provide the most effective assessment for the Atlanta Public Schools. The committee was composed of approximately 30 administrators of various backgrounds from the area and central offices.

In addition to their examination of the tests, members of the committee met with the faculties of many schools to determine their responses and preferences. That particular phase of the process involved 291 teachers, 22 principals, 16 parents, and two students. Although all four test batteries being reviewed received some favorable responses, the greatest number of votes from both the committee members and the school personnel was for the California Achievement Tests (CAT).

The CAT provides a continuous assessment program for students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. It is published by the same company that publishes the diagnostic reading test, which is administered each fall to all Atlanta students in grades 1 through 8. Scores from the Prescriptive Reading Inventory (PRI) have been linked statistically to scores of the CAT, thus providing a more sophisticated assessement of student progress than has been possible in the past. The popularity of the CAT is demonstrated by the major school systems which recently have adopted it for their assessment program. Among the systems in the Southeast are DeKalb County, Alabama State, Broward County, Tampa City, Memphis City, and North Carolina State.

The CAT was administered to all students in grades 1 through 9 this spring. The results will be announced in August. The CAT testing program will be extended to include all students in grades 1 through 11 in the spring of 1981.

Q: WILL CAT SCORES BE THE SAME AS ITBS SCORES ?

Whenever test instruments are changed, there is a possibility that summary scores may change as a result. The expectation relates not only to changes in test batteries (such as a change from the ITBS to CAT) but also to changes in edition of any one test battery (such as a change from 1971 ITBS to 1978 ITBS).

Some evidence is available which allows a very tenuous prediction of score changes. The Division of Research of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction conducted a study in 1979 to determine the equivalence of test scores for several different tests. They reported that the CAT produced scores very similar to the ITBS near the mean range for third grade. At the sixth grade, however, CAT scores near the mean were substantially higher than the ITBS.

The Division of Research, Evaluation, and Data Processing of the Atlanta Public Schools conducted an equating study of the ITBS and CAT during the fall of 1979. The results of that study indicate that, on the average, CAT scores are lower than ITBS scores for the primary grades for lower performing students. On the other hand, CAT scores tend to be higher than ITBS scores for intermediate and upper grades and for higher performing students.

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